

other bird. When it gets hold of a small lump of coconut fibre, it carries the same and places it inside the water pot for a few minutes. The thoroughly soaked bit of fibre is picked up and the crow settles down on the ground.

By pressing the lump of fibre on the ground with one claw, the crow peels off small strips with its beak and thus manages to use the entire lot for its nest. Such intelligence is probably noticeable in the case of crows only.

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14. NEST BUILDING ERROR BY A FEMALE PURPLERUMPED SUNBIRD

In July this year I was watching a Purple-rumped Sunbird building her nest in a Bougainvillea bush in my garden. The usual excited twittering which accompanies this activity could be heard throughout the day for about a week.

On closer inspection of the completed nest I was surprised to find that she had made a strange error during its construction. *The nest had no opening at all.* It was closed all round like a deflated balloon. There was no attempt at a projecting porch either. The pendant nature was basically like a normal nest, but it was not fully expanded like a correctly designed one.

After several days of excited twittering and repeatedly settling on the nest and hopping all around it, the pair unhappily left it alone. The female sunbird appeared agitated but was unable to take any corrective steps to create a hole, after the completion of the nest. This was not surprising as the entrance hole is formed during the early stage of building the nest.

I find that in a fairly large number of nests the entrance hole is placed facing the bush. I presume that the birds prefer to alight on the nest after having checked out its safety by hopping around in the bush if danger appears to be at hand. In this case there were several other trees and bushes close to the nest site. This may have confused her about its placement? The rather thin appearance of the nest is explainable, as I have noticed that the female after nearly completing the nest enters it, and by ruffling out her wings repeatedly expands it from within. This increases the space inside and probably makes the nest more comfortable for her. Since there was no way of entering this nest she could not get inside for finishing touches. However, I was unable to find out what had gone wrong during building of this nest.

Could this have been a young immature female perhaps indulging in nest building for the first time? Is it possible that she could not decide in which direction to place the hole and thus did not make one at all?

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